

SAVING THE BUSINESS

By George Elmer Cobb

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Nettie Durand sat at her typewriter awaiting dictation. Meanwhile she stole a secret glance more than once at John Ballentyne, office manager for her employer, Mark Lane.

She marveled at his quiet, unobtrusive ways. During the past six months he was ever the reticent but uniformly courteous young man on all occasions. It had pliqued Nettie somewhat, for she was used to attention, and from the first something in the open, earnest face of her office companion had attracted her.

"No life about him, Nettie, that is my opinion," Elsinore Drury had told her. "He's stone."

"He has taken me to an entertainment twice," vouchsafed Nettie, "and I have never met a more considerate gentleman."

"No fire, no enthusiasm," differed Elsinore. "Takes things as they go—no initiative."

Somehow Nettie was impressed with the ceremonial dignity of Mr. Ballentyne, yet it was a pleasant contrast to the shallow frivolity of most young men she knew.

"I respect him, that I must say," Nettie reflected.

Into the office early one morning Elsinore came all in a fluster. She beckoned Nettie into the rear office, out of the hearing of the others.

"Oh," she hurried, "I know I am not doing right in giving away professional secrets, but I think so much of you!"

"What now?" challenged Nettie with curiosity.

"You know I am stenographer for Mr. Wilson and that he is a lawyer?"

"Yes, Elsinore."

"Well, just a little while ago one of his clients from another city came their talk. It was about your employer, Mr. Lane."

"Why, how strange?"

"And serious it may turn out for you, dear."

"You startle me, Elsinore!"

"Well, I'm going to let out a secret. It seems that my employer is the attorney for a Mr. Charles Manville, and Mr. Manville is the man who advanced the capital for your Mr. Lane to start in business."

"I think I have heard something of that," murmured Nettie thoughtfully.

"Anyhow, your Mr. Lane has been talking of paying back Mr. Manville



"This is indeed Valuable and Timely Information."

for some time. Mr. Manville has become uneasy. So he came to the city to consult for legal advice. He stated his case to our Mr. Wilson. If your Mr. Lane is going to fail, or is in close quarters or anything like that he wants to seize on the business to pay himself before a lot of creditors get ahead of him."